

A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of PHCCI Summer Youth Program Tutees Turned LabCoop Officers

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One of the pressing challenges of many cooperatives is ensuring second-liners and successors who will continue the works of the movement in a genuinely cooperative way. The aim of this paper is to highlight how PHCCI-MPC Tacloban has successfully run a youth arts program for thirteen years, thus producing six of its tutees as incumbent officers of the PHCCI Laboratory Cooperative and potential future leaders of the guardian cooperative. This paper specifically delves into the youth's significant experience in the Summer Tutee-Friendly Program, and how this arts program has developed the young lives of these tutees turned Lab Coop officers. This phenomenological study gathered data using key informant interviews and secondary source materials. The paper concludes that PHCCI-MPC's Tutee-Friendly Program has apparently discovered and developed not only the talents and skills of the young but subliminally developed their leadership potentials, too. Furthermore, this study encourages cooperatives to continually invest on and empower the youth, who has much to give thru their hopeful ideals and courage as they respond creatively and innovatively to the pressing challenges they experience, thereby developing them as responsible second liners and the bloodline of the cooperative movement.

Keywords: Coop Youth Leaders, Laboratory Cooperative, PHCC-MPC Tacloban,
Youth development, Coop Second-Liners, Youth Arts Program

INTRODUCTION

Philippine national hero Dr. Jose Rizal believes the youth is the hope of the motherland and that the future lies in their hands. These young people have to be prepared in their formative years so that they will bring along with them as they mature, the wisdom of the old and the great opportunities of the present times fully equipped with efficiency, responsibility, and integrity. Indeed, investing in the next generation of leaders is critical in achieving inclusive growth in organizations and across communities everywhere. One of the pressing challenges of many cooperatives is ensuring successors and second-liners who will sustain the works of the movement in a genuinely cooperative way.

This study claims that investing on the youth's interest, specifically art programs, is a leadership transformational opportunity because along the process they subliminally develop the self and social confidence, and competencies needed for adulthood. The aim of this paper is to highlight how Perpetual Help Multi-Purpose Cooperative (PHCCI-MPC) Tacloban has managed the Summer Tutee-Friendly GR.O.W.T.H Program (shortly called Tutee Program/Workshop), an education and arts development program, for thirteen years thus producing six of its tutees as incumbent officers of PHCCI Kiddy and Y.E.S (Youth Enthusiastic Savers) Laboratory Cooperative and potential leaders of PHCCI. This paper then will substantiate that the youth's involvement in Tutee Program was a relevant preliminary exposure for them to develop their leadership skills, as they exemplify confidence and competence in rehearsals and recital, work out healthy social interactions with co-tutees, and cultivate discipline and responsibility in performing assigned tasks. All these were empowering, thus, they embrace easily the opportunity to serve as

an officer in the Laboratory Coop, and perceive themselves as potential second line leaders of PHCCI.

It has been established that youth development programs (McLaughlin et al., 2004; Lerner, 2004; Benson, 1997) are gaining prominence as a way to help young people become competent, engaged and responsible adults. Participation in organized youth arts activity has been found to improve aspects of young people's social and emotional wellbeing (Ennis and Tonkin, 2017). Multiple studies have highlighted the positive effects of community arts participation (Daykin et al. 2008; Kay 2000; Lowe 2000; McHenry 2009) which include increases in self-esteem, confidence, artistic and communication skills, the creation of positive social connections, feelings of belongingness and sense of identity and community. Meanwhile, Dawes and Larson (2011) posit that for youth to benefit from many of the developmental opportunities provided by organized programs, they need to not only attend but become psychologically engaged in program activities. Self-confidence, being one of the most significant impacts of developmental programs, is considered the most valuable attribute of leadership (Barthold, 2014). Having been developed by Arts programs, creativity, therefore, is a core; Fukada, et. al (2001) believe that creative leaders are better able to find alternate solutions or ideas when solving problems or reaching goals.

Many of the youth arts programs are offered in school as part of their extra-curricular activities only. Tapping young leaders are mostly observed in leadership development activities like scouting, sports, and student government. Community-based groups like cooperatives seldom have art programs fostering second-liners development. These activities, instead, just stand as past time activities for the young people. While extensive studies have been conducted on the positive effects and holistic developmental perspective of youth development programs, there is a literature gap or has not been as many studies connecting these positive effects to leadership development.

Also, much of the youth program researches focused on the community and political outcomes instead of the processes of change and effects to the youth participants (Moguel, 2015). The current paper aims to show the connection and advocate for its value.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study utilized Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology in interpreting the findings of the research questions, (1) how has PHCCI Tacloban managed a youth arts program for thirteen years, thus producing six of its tutees as incumbent officers of its Lab Coop, and potential leaders of the guardian coop? (2) How has the tutee workshop experience fostered the youth's transition in becoming a Lab Coop officer? What experiences may be attributed to the Tutee program participation that contributed to being a Lab Coop officer; and (3) How has the tutee and lab coop experience affect the youth? What changes are associated with the experience?

Phenomenology seeks to describe accurately remaining truth to facts (Groenewald, 2004) and the researcher with its connection with the participants shall be able to see the world from their perspectives. When using phenomenological interviewing, the purpose is to generate detailed and in-depth descriptions of human experiences (Moguel, 2015).

Purpose sampling was used to identify the six participants who became tutees first prior their labcoop officership. One of them has been a consistent tutee for 11 years and has been a tutor for the recent two summers, and moreover has been an officer in the lab coop since its early organizational years. The 11-year-old officer has consistently enrolled since she was 3 years old in different workshops and became an assistant tutor this summer; she has been an officer since 2013. Likewise, another 11 year old has regularly enrolled every summer for four different

workshops since he was 6 years old, and just this year he made it as a BOD. Meanwhile, the two siblings enrolled in different workshops for four summers, and have volunteered to be assistant tutors this summer. Both of them became officers for this year, too. The remaining one attended two workshops for three summers and has been a BOD since 2015. Only two among them are not children of incumbent officers of PHCCI. Their mothers have been a big influence as to why they became young co-operators. Their parents are all members of PHCCI for the longest time and for some, they have served the coop as officers for quite a time already.

Data collection consisted of in-depth, open-ended and semi-structured one-on-one interviews, and secondary source materials. Follow-up questions deemed appropriate were asked for clarificatory purposes. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Ricoeur's hermeneutics phenomenology interpretation was utilized in the data analysis commencing with naïve reading, followed by thematic structural analysis; then concise abstraction into everyday words; further abstraction to create sub-themes; and finally the creation of major themes (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004).

Questions of the interview guide were subjected to validation by professionals in the field. As part of ethical principles of research, the researcher sought consent from the participants and their parents since they are still minors, obtained permission to record and publish, and ensured confidentiality of shared information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part discusses the results of the qualitative interviews and gathered secondary source data in order to answer the research questions. Interpretations of the findings are presented on how this study fills existing literature gaps.

PHCCI TUTEE-FRIENDLY SUMMER GR.O.W.T.H PROGRAM

Summer season in the Philippines is a break from school, a breather from academic routines. This is also the time for the children to explore different extra-curricular activities like sports and arts development programs. Public schools do not offer these programs because teachers are on their vacation, only private institutions do. Because of this, summer programs have been pricey that only a selected few with extra income can afford. PHCCI then came up with a program of its own, offering academic and arts development tracks with a very minimal registration fee. The program culminates with the distribution of certificate of completion, awarding of exemplary tutees who receive collection-item tutee pins and certificate of recognition, and the recital where tutees get to perform at least twice for every enrolled track.

The “Tutee-Friendly”GR.O.W.TH (GRoup Of Workshops, Tutorials & Help) Program started in 2005 with an aim to discover and develop potentials and talents, for children to gain knowledge in the subject area they have chosen and express themselves through their creative outputs; boost their self-esteem and self-confidence; and appreciate the gains and fruits derived from hard work

Tutee Program started with six academic tracks in Math, English, and Computer, and three tracks for arts development (Arts and Crafts, Voice and Dance). Later, the academic subject

tutorials were turned over to the subsidiary school of PHCCI; Tutee program just focused on the workshops, with Speech/Theatre Arts and Guitar as additional tracks. To date, this self-liquidating program has been enjoyed by youth members for thirteen years, and still counting for more operational years to come.

PHCCI KIDDY AND Y.E.S LABORATORY COOPERATIVE

One of the expectations of the Tutee program is that potential tutees will be tapped for other activities of the youth program. Having these tutees emerged as lab coop officers is a fulfillment of such expectation.

Even before the mandate of Philippine Republic Act 9520 to establish laboratory cooperatives, PHCCI has already its Kiddy Program in 1988 and its Y.E.S. Youth Program in 1995. The savings deposit mobilization aimed to instill the value of thriftiness in every child. Sooner, General Assemblies exclusive for the children members were conducted. Young leaders were tapped to spearhead the activities for the young co-operators. Different batches undertook leadership training, and later, writing workshops were offered for the revival of PHCCI's official newsletter exclusively managed by the youth. The young leaders were also given the chance to work with PHCCI officers as they were allowed to witness and participate in their local and international activities.

In 2010, PHCCI started the establishment of the laboratory cooperative with its interim officers. Finally, by January 2013, PHCCI Kiddy and Y.E.S. Laboratory Cooperative was registered with the Cooperative Development Authority as the first lab coop in the region, with forty-five incorporators and among them are seven Board of Directors, and a paid-up share capital of thirty-five thousand pesos.

To serve as a training ground for its members in preparation for regular membership; and to instill cooperative values, principles, financial discipline and leadership skills among its members are just few of the purposes for which the laboratory cooperative was organized.

Currently, there are 24 incumbent officers occupying the elective and appointive positions for the Board of Directors, Secretary, Treasurer, and the five different committees. Officers' ages range from 7-17 years old.

LIVED EXPERIENCES

The participants are 3 girls and 3 boys whose ages range from 11-16 years old. All of them repeatedly enrolled in the tutee workshop for 3 -13 times.

Five recurring themes were identified reflecting the lived experiences of these tutees developed as lab coop officers. These themes are parental influence, self-discovery and development, self-confidence and social confidence, interpersonal skills, and 'living it' journey.

These themes are discussed herein, with relevant quotations from the interviews.

Theme 1: Parental Influence

Parents play a fundamental role in their children's development (Maccoby, 1992) and the dynamics of such influence. All participants expressed that it was their mothers who registered them as members of the PHCCI Youth Program and enrolled them in the Tutee Program. Their mothers were officers, except for two who were only regular but active members, of the coop at the time when they first became tutees. Since they were young then, they did not know anything till they grew up older.

My first school was Tutee's Arts and Crafts at 3 years old when I could barely hold a pencil. Then Dance track was added two years later. From the initial decision of my mother, I freely enrolled in academic subjects, continued my Dance workshop, and added Guitar track to my repertoire. (Participant 6)

Based on my mother's story, I first attended Arts and Crafts because it was the only program that accepted 3-year-old children, but after participating rehearsals informally in the Dance class, I was eventually accepted by the tutor and performed in the recital still with my diaper on. Since then, I enrolled in the Dance track. (Participant4)

My mother enrolled me in the Arts and Crafts because I was very shy. He wanted me to interact with my fellow tutees and gain friends. I was six then and turning Grade 1. The following year, I joined the Dance and Voice tracks. Thereafter, I enrolled two programs every summer and added Guitar lessons to my list of tracks. (Participant2)

The assertion of the mothers on their children's' participation in the tutee program and the likelihood of compliance of the children demonstrated Maccoby 'systems of reciprocity' between mothers and children on their shared cooperation and the enjoyable interactions in which both of them experienced positive results (1992). Later as they grew older they voluntarily involved themselves in the summer program.

At first, it was just Mom's decision to register me and my sister in the Dance program. Eventually, I stayed in the same program because I knew I have the talent and I was enjoying dancing with my friends.(Participant 3)

I have always loved singing that's why I gladly chose to re-enroll in the Voice class in the succeeding workshops. Though I also enjoyed the Dance class, I finally decided to stick with my first love, that is singing. (Participant 1)

Just like my sister, I also enjoyed my Dance workshop but sometime in 2014, I was challenged to take up Speech/Theatre arts to my own volition.(Participant 5)

Though shared facts fully support the successful influence of their mothers on them, it was lessened overtime as they themselves braced the positive impact of such influence, and freely participated in the workshop.

Theme 2: Self-discovery and development

They discovered and developed their talent through the tutee program, just a childhood play initially considered by the participants.

"Play is the work of the child" is a commonly repeated anthem among early childhood educators (Ceglowski, 1997). Children's programs are designed to be opportunities for fun, play and learning altogether. Since these children were initially motivated only by their mothers to become tutees, they never thought of the workshop as a learning episode; it was simply a "play experience" for them when they would report daily to their classes to do their thing. However, the daily exposure enhanced their innate creative thoughts through their "play" (Billman, 1996) in the tutee program, thus slowly discovered their talents and developed them eventually. The tutee program became a genuine breakthrough in discovering and developing their talents in singing, dancing, playing the guitar, dramatics, and creating arts and crafts. The following shared experiences prove it all:

Maybe I would never know how to dance, or even have the guts to dance before a big audience had it not been my dance workshops for probably eight consecutive years. Videos would show my improvement each year. First, I felt dancing like a pro since I was innocently performing at 5 then but when timidity hit me, cameras caught me looking on the floor; but in the following years, I was already grooving enjoyably. I feel so much elated and proud when I receive

compliments like “you did great!” and “very good”. Furthermore, the Tutee program, although music may really run in the blood, first discovered that I have the ears for music and fingers friendly to musical instruments. Praises given after my performances confirm my effort in putting my best foot forward. (Participant 6)

I had my first dance recital still on my diapers at three years old. A video could tell that I barely memorized the steps but I was seriously putting my best in doing my routines. This became a yearly workshop for me and as time progressed, I realized that I have the groove for dancing as confirmed by those who watched me danced. Praises after performances became my validation of the talent I discovered.(Participant 4)

Just like any other kid, I already have the heart for dancing but performing one in reality was an opportunity I got from the Tutee program. Surprisingly, I also discovered that I could carry out drama, take on lines to memorize, and host a program; all these were my “first time” when I enrolled in the Speech and Theatre Arts. (Participant 5)

Being known to be shy, I was supported by my mother on discovering what I could do and eventually I was able to overcome my shyness. Enrolling in four different programs enabled me to discover that I have the hands for arts and crafts, do some drawing, dance a little, sing very well, and play the guitar. Since I joined when I was only five years old, all these have been developed and improved for six years that I consistently enrolled every summer.(Participant 2)

My experience in singing and dancing was mostly in school. I have the opportunity to sing with my chorale group but I got the opportunity to sing solo and in trio during the Tutee’s recital, before a big audience. I also got the chance to dance hip-hop with my fellow teens.(Participant 1)

Indeed, one of the objectives of the program which is to discover and develop potentials and talents is believed to have been achieved per aforementioned revelations of the participants.

Theme 3: Self-confidence and Social Confidence

Two common things shared by the six participants that they owe to the Tutee Program is the development of their social skills and confidence.

Play contributes to the development of positive peer relationships (Hartup, 1993; Rubin, 1990). Reporting daily to the workshop and performing with fellow tutees enabled them to build beautiful friendships. They were able to adjust to different personalities and accept individual uniqueness even at an early age. To cite, they said:

Even if we come from different schools and we have different ages, we are able to talk about different topics, jam and play without misunderstandings. We let everyone in. (Participant4)

During break time or after lessons, we stay for a while and share stories. We exchange mobile numbers and have ourselves friends in FB, even creating a group chat so that we could still communicate even if the workshop is over. When the next summer is approaching, we convince each other to re-enroll and invite other friends to join us. Our friendship does not end in the workshop because we keep in touch with each other through FB. (Participant 1)

Sharing ones thoughts in opportunities of conversational encounters even when they just met for the first time taught them how to trust people and feel accepted:

Because of the Tutee Program, I gained friends from other schools. Since some of my fellow tutees became my classmates in the opening of classes, I became very happy because I already have friends in school. I used to be bullied but with my new friends around, their friends became mine, too. I feel accepted this time.(Participant 2)

Social anxiety sets in when you work with others whom you do not know or they are not your friends. Since they made friends easily, doing their tasks in the workshop became easier. They even help and support each other by teaching dance steps, practice their songs and guitar jam by themselves. Mentoring each other and their constant interaction develop also their communication skills and self-confidence.

I was surprised at first when our tutor assigned me to help the younger kids in our class. It felt so good that I gained the trust of our mentor. It really meant a lot to me that it boosted my self-confidence. (Participant1)

When I accepted the assignment to assist the younger tutees, I had this sense of satisfaction that I was given the trust and the responsibility. I really did my best so that these young kids will look up to me as a role model. This pushed me harder to refine my craft, develop hard work and discipline. (Participant 6)

Theme 4: Interpersonal Skills

Their experience in the tutee program paved way to their officership in the lab coop, and their anticipation of being an officer of the mother coop given the opportunity.

Equipped with skills and talent that they discovered and developed, deciding to be an officer in the LabCoop was an easy decision for all of them. Had it not been for the tutee program, they will not know the existence of PHCCI and the programs it offer; their entry point to the Cooperative was their becoming a tutee. Becoming an officer meant a year-round activity for them in the Coop.

When we conduct education seminar to incoming members, I feel like the guardian coop officers whose tasks go beyond for themselves but for others too. I feel charged and responsible to convince the newbies to be members and experience what we do with fun and joy.(Participant 3)

Playing and competing during the Sportsfests with the PHCCI family was enabling and overwhelming. They rooted and cheered for us while engaging in the activities. It was really surprising.(Participant 4)

Promoting our products during the PHCCI Cooperators' Area Conference and convincing people to buy what we were selling was empowering. Earning money is indeed not easy but the fruit of thy labor is sweet. Selling and performing intermission numbers before thousands of audience was self-conquering. (Participant 1)

An extension of their short stint in the tutee program was what they were looking for. Nurturing friendships and keeping constant communication with fellow tutees were motivating factors of running for officership. Of course, the influence of their mothers remains in their decision except that this time, they were no longer unconsciously pushed to get into the matter. Another factor that made the transition easy was the presence of friends who are also tutees turned officers.

These children also perceive themselves as future officers of the mother coop. When asked why they love their experience in PHCCI, everybody shared a common answer: a big portion of who they are now is the work of the tutee program and lab coop. They further ascertained that they could do more for PHCCI in the later years when they are more matured, equipped, and developed.

Growing up, I see myself still in the Coop as a leader. Being a lab coop officer and observing young incumbent Board of Directors of the mother coop inspires me to be one like them.(Participant 2)

I want to make use of the training given to us by serving fellow coop members. When one time asked by a peer as to what do I get from being an officer even without remuneration, I told her that there is an unexplainable fulfillment and joy which is evident when I religiously and enjoyably attend all our activities. Like my mother, her officership is one great opportunity to be of service to others. (Participant 1)

PHCCI invests on us because they trust us and they see in us the potentials of being quality leaders. To be specific, they allow us to join in activities where we are able to work with the staff and officers; they don't just allow us to sit and observe but instead, they give us tasks to prove our worth. They give us the opportunity to exercise responsibility and discipline. This is trust in concrete ways. (Participant 6)

Still, they want to follow the footsteps of their mothers whom they see happy and contented despite the joggling of their busy schedules. Their mother's influence towards their choices in life is evident.

Theme 5: 'Living It' Journey

The participants' journey from tutees to lab coop officers forms part of their middle childhood experience. It greatly influenced what they have achieved and developed now in their academics and extra-curricular activities.

Middle childhood repertoire of concepts and skills continually grows and greatly influence future choices. The acquisition of a variety of intellectual, social, and artistic skills contributes to the development of self-concept (Collins, 1984) which dictates choice of activities in and out of school. Middle childhood is the stage of self-development that can best be characterized by the conviction "I am what I learn." (Erikson 1959, qtd in Collins, 1984).

I never thought I could either speak before a large audience or act seriously. I owe it to the Tutee Program when I became one of the casts of the movie 'Taklub' that won in an International Film Festival in 2015. I enrolled in the Speech and Theatre Arts prior to the shooting of Taklub. I was the main emcee of the whole culminating activity, and also had a drama stint together with my fellow tutees. The things I learned in that summer motivated me to audition for the role in Taklub, plus my theatre arts experience made me confident to give justice to my role. Luckily, I was taken in that one big lifetime experience and finished with a bang because I won the "Best Child Actress" in the international scene for that cli-fi movie. Such prestigious award was not only my personal feat but also that of my fellow Yolanda (aka Typhoon Haiyan) victims and the Tutee Program. (Participant5)

It all started when I learned to play five songs through my guitar, which looked ridiculous on me because at that time, it was too big for me yet. That was my first time. Fast forward, I am currently in the Special Program for the Arts with musical instruments as my specialization. It fulfills me when I am praised for my live and uploaded piano playing performances. Now, I have my own band where I alternately do the guitar Rhythm and play keyboard; perform in the different special programs of the school; compete in and out of school contests; and I am an accompanist in a church choir. If there's one great leap, that is when I was considered a tutor of the Guitar track for two consecutive summers now. As one of the tutees who discovered and developed my guitar playing skills in the program, I definitely know the feeling when you know nothing yet come out learned. (Participant 6)

Since the tutee dance workshop is on hip-hop, I explored another form of dance which was exactly the opposite of what I started learning. It was a challenge for me to take ballet lessons but I'm still into it in poise and grace. I embraced both worlds of hip-hop and ballet with love and joy

in my heart. I owe my talent and love for dancing to the Tutee Program which started it all. (participant 4)

My guitar lessons in the Tutee Program helped me become a member of the Rondalla group in our school. I was basically a raw starter in guitar playing and I'm happy that I ended up not only playing guitar but banduria as well. Through my Tutee workshops, I realized that I have the talent in playing musical instruments which allows me to perform before a big audience with confidence. I am also happy that with my developed confidence and leadership skills, I am now a Patrol Leader in Boy's Scouting. With the support of my many friends now, I have better grades which make my nanay and tatay so proud of me. (Participant 2)

Essentially, the aforementioned experiences are captured in one fact:

One thing I realized that the foundation of what I am now is my Tutee program experience. What used to be a childhood play thing paved way to my significant and colorful experience of my teen life now. It awakened the "creative" in me and developed not just my talent but my personality, too. (Participant 6)

The child's increasing interest in learning and developing new skills culminates in a personal "sense of industry"—a basic sense of competence that is relevant both to the mastery of more sophisticated learning tasks and to cooperation (Collins, 1984).

DISCUSSION

Investing in the next generation of leaders is critical to achieve growth within organizations and across communities everywhere. Not only growth is realized but an extension of existence, thus ascertaining sustainability of adults' endeavors today. Empowering the youth through

establishing developmental programs embolden them to take on responsibilities; and working with them hand in hand is a decision to make if one seeks for life line security.

Two developmental youth programs of PHCCI-MPC Tacloban are the Summer Tutee-Friendly GR.O.W.T.H Program and the PHCCI Kiddy and YES Laboratory Coop whose objectives include discovering and developing the talents and potentials of the youth; and boosting their self-esteem and self-confidence; and instilling cooperative values, principles, financial discipline and leadership skills among its members respectively. Though not specifically designed to foster youth leadership, its objectives overlap with important aspects of leadership.

Commonalities found among the participants are the impact of the Tutee Program on the young people's social and emotional wellbeing that is they were able to develop their social and communication skills, self-confidence, and value of discipline and responsibility.

Wellbeing benefits have been associated with dance (Oliver 2009), theatre (James 2005) singing (Hampshire and Matthijsse 2010), as well as combinations of these and other art forms (Karkou and Glasman 2004). Youth arts activities are thought to contribute to self-confidence and self-esteem (Bungay and Vella-Burrows 2013). The participants' experiences are confirmed by Ennis and Tonkin (2017) who aver that positive effects of engaging in arts have been found to increase in self-esteem, confidence, artistic skills, communication skills, and the creation of positive social connections. Several studies on the effects of extra-curricular creative activities towards young people (11-18 years old) reflected positive effects 'on behavioral changes, self-confidence, self-esteem, levels of knowledge and physical activity' (Bungay and Vella-Burrows 2013).

The transformational experience of the participants from being tutees to lab coop leaders may be divided into three phases: Awakening Stage, Becoming Stage, and the Enabling Stage.

The 'Awakening Stage' speaks of the 1st theme, the parental influence whereby the mother, being an officer or member, became the instrument for having them in the PHCCI Youth Program. Three of the participants were only 3-5 years old and the other three were 7-10 years old); still so dependent that its either they mirror what parents do or succumb to whatever parents like them to do. Being minors, most of their activities are dictated by parents which they tend to like at a later phase; this is what happened when they were enrolled in the Tutee workshop unaware, yet found themselves staying in the program. Had it not been for the prodding of mothers, their inclination and interest could not have been awakened.

The 'Becoming Stage' accounts themes 2 and 3, the moment when they started enjoying what they were doing, and there was much self-discovery and development working. Finding a safe place to 'be yourself' is another reason why youth arts activities are beneficial to young people (Trayes, Harré, and Overall 2012).

As shared, they first discovered and developed their talents through the tutee program, which they eventually shared with confidence in school and community. All these became possible because they were able to develop self and social confidence through their daily interactions. Finding a group composed of people with same interest was one big factor that made the interaction among themselves easy. They just did not talk about their talent but they expounded on their school and family life, interests and hobbies, and even young love experiences. Having each other's trust and acceptance was highly valued. Expressing oneself then became natural, thus communication skill was also improved.

Group dynamics and team learning as part of the workshop process opened opportunities for the participants to develop their discipline and sense of responsibility. Owning up and taking charge of responsibilities entail self-confidence. Coming and finishing on time, meeting target

goals, listening and sharing, formed part of their discipline. They became accountable for each other's progress and collectively aimed for the "team goal" for their recital. Being able to create art with others requires the ability to be open, spontaneous and embrace playfulness (Karkou and Glasman 2004), hence strategizing and collaboration for them was both fun and learning episodes.

Self-conquer and self-confidence meant having your performance witnessed by others and being a witness to others performances, plus overcoming nervousness and taming the overwhelming feeling when performing before a large audience utilizing skills and knowledge. Participants found in the Tutee workshop not only opportunities for talent validation, but also to be listened at and make relevant contributions.

Having their ideas taken seriously, being responsible and having the opportunity to do things without parental involvement or judgment, were all seen as ways in which young people were treated 'as adults' (Ennis & Tonkin (2017).

The 'Enabling Stage' captures themes 4 and 5 which are the development of 'interpersonal skills' and the journey of 'living it'.

The participants' transition from being a tutee to a lab coop officer accounts for their willingness to take on a higher responsibility. Their feeling of belongingness to the group made the transition easy. This is also the time when interpersonal skills are highlighted such as the development of 'leaderships skills', 'empathy', 'creative thinking', and 'communication skills' (Ennis and Tonkin, 2017). Their tutee workshop stint was not enough for them because summer workshops were just short. Becoming an officer gives them a year-round responsibility of projects to be planned and accomplished. The officership goes beyond the rehearsal routines and the recital performance; this time, they get to work with the guardian coop officers and staff, and they end up given tasks to accomplish not only for the lab coop but for the entirety of PHCCI. Reality strikes

and sets in. The lab coop activities switched on their leadership and communication skills, and creative thinking to get across working with others and meeting their goals.

As their leadership opportunity is also extended to school and community activities at present, they also see their selves as PHCCI Regular Officers if given the opportunity in the future. This suggests that their Tutee-friendly and lab coop experience may provide the foundation needed to foster profound transformation of being a PHCCI youth to a PHCCI leader.

The journey of ‘living it’ is a work in progress. This is the stage which can be perceived as the desired result of the first two stages. As the participants go out from their comfort zones in PHCCI and get to emerge themselves in the real world, they realized the way they have been influenced through evolving into a performer with ‘real skills’ and/or coming to understand the role of arts as integrated in their system.

Indeed, youth art activities have been found to offer young people emotionally diverse experiences (Larson and Brown 2007). This could be the reason why all the participants have continued their involvement in the same creative and performing arts, and added even more like exploring to ballet and playing other musical instruments which were not offered in the tutee program, either as a hobby or curricular activities. Even at an early age, they are living the coop life integrated in their field of choices, establishing that their journey from being a tutee to a labcoop officer has influenced what they have achieved and developed now in their academics and extra-curricular activities.

CONCLUSION

Youth development programs are gaining prominence as a way to help young people become competent, engaged and responsible adults. Yet, many adults do not know how to involve youth in meaningful leadership opportunities (Mortensen et al, 2014). The road may have been

long for PHCCI, but investing on and trusting the power of the youth is priceless. The lived experiences of these participants prove that the youth arts program and labcoop are effective opportunities for leaders to be discovered and developed. They are living testimonies. The silo that youth are contained to of being only the “leaders of tomorrow” is contested in the results. They are leaders now. Of course leadership skills change throughout a leader’s lifetime but with the youth’s continual and consistent exposure and training in the cooperative come a competent and efficient bloodline of the cooperative movement. By tackling the responsibility of growing leadership skills in today’s youth, society ensures effective leadership for tomorrow (Seevers, Dormody, & Clason, 1995).

RECOMMENDATION

From this study, the researcher recommends that coops without programs for the youth start redefining their vision for the future leaders of their own organizations. May cooperatives continue advocating and supporting them to be able to develop second-liners when the current leaders exhaust their eligibilities to become directors or committee officers.

Finally, it is recommended that a similar study be conducted in other cooperatives that have active youth programs or laboratory coops so as to compare the findings.

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